

**Summary of the
Transition Committee Meeting
November 17, 1998**

The Transition Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met on November 17, 1998, at 11am by teleconference. The meeting was led by its co-chair, Dr. Charles Brokopp. A list of participants is given in Attachment A. *The purpose of the meeting was to discuss issues on the prepared agenda.*

Summary of July 1 meeting in San Antonio

Summary of July Transition Committee meeting has been posted on the WEB. No corrections or additions were noted.

Follow up of action items:

A. Develop guidelines to help accrediting authorities. What areas need to be addressed? Proposed Roundtable at NELAC 4i will address some of the concerns being raised by accrediting authorities. Committee members to e-mail questions to Carol and Chuck that can be addressed by the committee. Charles suggested collecting "What if" questions. Some of these questions involve time lines for laboratory accreditation, development and use of checklists, and PT requirements.

B. Clarify effective dates of NELAC standards (deferred to Dec 1 meeting)

C. Collect information on intent of laboratories to request NELAP accreditation
Laboratories in states where recognized accrediting authorities (AA) exists will need to obtain their primary accreditation from their home state. Laboratories in states where there is no AA will need go to an out-of-state AA to obtain their accreditation. An estimate of the number and location of AA and the number of in-state and out-of-state laboratories would be helpful. The capacity of each approved AA to accredit both in-state and out-of-state labs needed to be determined. Jerry and Chuck will develop a way to collect this information and make it available to the committee for review prior to NELAC 4i. May be able to work with ACIL and the AWWA labs to gather some of the information.

D. Respond to frequently asked questions. What are the questions? Posting of responses - where, how? Questions need to be sent to Carol and Chuck prior to next conference call on December 1.

Approval of Accrediting Authorities.

Betsy updated the committee on the status of approval of AA's. No AA has yet been approved. All six programs that have been visited have had some area that need to be addressed. Three additional programs (CA, VA, FL) have been scheduled for on-site reviews in the near future. One state (DE) has placed their application on hold, and two states (MD, WV) have withdrawn

their applications. A target date on March 1, 1999 has been set as the date to have the first group of AA approved. It is anticipated that at least 10 AA will be able to be approved by March 1. No other states have recently submitted an application to become an AA. Any state that submits an application will be processed in the order received.

Posting of summary information on the status AA approvals would be helpful. Specific information on the approval status of state AA will be needed by this committee.

Approval of EPA as an AA still needs to be addressed. EPA will be accrediting the state laboratories. A few state laboratories will be ready to be accredited by EPA early in 1999.

Time line for laboratory accreditation.

The time line for laboratories to become accredited by AA is a frequently asked question. Once an AA is approved, laboratories may be accredited to NELAP standards. Following the approval of the initial group of AA in the Spring of 1999, the committee should consider setting a specific date upon which the AA can officially allow the laboratories that meet NELAP standards to claim accreditation. Since AA's may not be able to survey all laboratories within a few months of becoming an approved AA, some mechanism to initially provide accreditation to all laboratories is needed. An alternative might be to establish a date 6-12 months after the initial AA are approved and allow the AA to accredit as many labs as they can before that date. After the agreed upon date, all labs that have been accredited would be able to claim accreditation to NELAP standards. Further discussion and some resolution of this issue is planned for the next Transition Committee meeting.

Clarification of which version of standards to use

When do standards for laboratories become effective? Laboratories will need to meet the NELAP standards at the time that they apply for accreditation. The delay in officially adopting the NELAP standards into state rule may create problems for some AA's. Should or could the laboratory be required to meet a recently adopted NELAP standard even though the AA has not officially gotten the standard incorporated into the state rules? In many cases, laboratories will voluntarily comply with recently adopted NELAC standards. AA's may need to apply some flexibility on when to apply new standards. Likewise, laboratories may need to be allowed to meet either the existing or the recently adopted standard when requesting accreditation.

Which version of standards will AA be evaluated against? According to Section 6.5, an AA applying before July 1, 2002 would have two years to obtain the necessary legislation and adopt the necessary rules for compliance with NELAP. An AA would also have two years to implement revisions in their program brought on by changes in the NELAC standards (Sec 6.5e).

A policy to clarify these issues would be helpful and will be considered at next meeting.

Guidelines for assisting accrediting authorities

Based on initial reviews of AA, what guidelines would be most useful??

Supplemental requirements

How does NELAP deal with supplement (state) requirements?

Status of training of lab surveyors

This is an item that needs to be addressed by the Board. There is some urgency in developing and providing this training. Although current laboratory surveyors can be “grand fathered” , the demand for trained surveyors is going to increase as AA come on line. Funding for the development of training courses and the delivery of the courses must be identified.

Availability of initial round of PT

NIST will not PT providers approved in time for the initial round of laboratory accreditations. The first PT providers to be approved by NIST will only cover the analytes included in the WS and WP audits. Laboratories will need some guidance on how to comply with the requirement of providing PT results from two recent audits as part of the initial laboratory accreditation. AA’s may need to designate “approved PT providers” for labs to use or select some other way to work with lab to meet the requirements for PT. Until NIST can approve additional PT providers. Labs may need to find a source of acceptable PT samples and obtain their samples from that source. A provision in Chapter 2.0 allows AA’s to rely on non-EPA sources of PT provided those source meet current EPA regulatory requirements.

Agenda for NELAC 4i Transition Committee (Tuesday Jan 12, 1:30-4:30pm)

- Status of Accrediting Authority Approvals
- Time line for laboratory accreditation
- Capacity of Approved Accrediting Authorities
- Clarification of Issues - Response to Questions

Agenda for next Conference call (Tuesday Dec 1, 11-12:30 EST)

- Roll call
- Approval of Summary from November 17 meeting
- Approval of Accrediting Authorities - Jeanne
- Time lines for approval of AA and accreditation of laboratories
- Review and organize questions for Roundtables - Carol
- Input from laboratories - Jerry and Chuck
- Avoiding supplemental requirements(?)

Attachment

A

PARTICIPANTS
Transition Committee
November 17, 1998

<u>Name</u>	<u>Affiliation</u>	<u>Address</u>
<u>Charles Brokopp</u> co-Chair	UT Department of Health	T: (801) 584 - 8450 F: (801) 584 - 8486 E: cbrokopp@doh.state.ut.us
Carol Batterton co-Chair	Tx Natural Resource Conservation Commission	T: (512) 239-6300 F: (512) 239-6307 E: cbattert@tnrcc.state.tx.us
John Anderson	IL EPA, Division of Laboratories	T: (217) 782 - 6455 F: (217) 524 - 0944 E: jpanderson@epa.state.il.us
Stephen Clark	USEPA/OW	T: (202) 260 - 7159 F: (202) 260 - 4383 E: clark.stephen@epamail.epa.gov
Betsy Dutrow (invited)	USEPA/ORD	T: (202) 564-9061 F: (202) 565- E: dutrow.elizabeth@epamail.epa.gov
Eaton, Andrew	Montgomery-Watson Laboratories	T: (626) 568 - 6425 F: (626) 568 - 6326 E: andrew.eaton@us.mw.com
Charles Hartwig	FL Dept. of Health	T: (904) 791 - 1550 F: (904) 791 - 1567 E: charles_hartwig@doh.state.fl.us
Wilson Hershey (absent)	Lancaster Laboratories, Inc.	T: (717) 656 - 2300 F: (717) 656 - 0450 E: jwhershey@lancasterlabs.com
Kenneth Jackson	NY State Dept. of Health	T: (518) 485 - 5570 F: (518) 485 - 5568 E: jackson@wadsworth.org
Jeanne Mourrain (absent)	USEPA/ORD	T: (919) 541 - 1120 F: (919) 541 - 4261 E: mourrain.jeanne@epamail.epa.gov
Jerry Parr	Catalyst Info. Resources, L.L.C.	T: (303) 670 - 7823 F: (303) 670 - 2964 E: catalyst@eazy.net

Ann Rosecrance (absent)	Core Laboratories	T: (713) 329 - 7414 F: (713) 895 - 8982 E: arosecrance@corelabcorp.com
Gene Tatsch (contractor support)	Research Triangle Institute	T: (919) 541-6930 F: (828) 628-0659 E: cet@rti.org